

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COLUMBIA DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Criminal No: 3:19-108 TLW

v.

JOHN HARDEE

Motion for Variance

Defendant John Hardee, by and through the undersigned counsel, hereby moves the Court pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 3553 for a variance from the advisory sentencing guidelines and requests the Court impose a non-custodial sentence as jointly agreed upon by the Government and Hardee in the negotiated plea agreement. ECF 2.

INTRODUCTION

I. GUIDELINE CALCULATION

The offense level for obstruction is 14 pursuant to U.S.S.G. Section 2J1.2 (a). Hardee has received a 2-level reduction for acceptance of responsibility under U.S.S.G. Section 3E1.1(a). The adjusted offense level is 12, resulting in a guideline range of 10-16 months within Zone C. Zone C permits the Court to impose of split sentence, allowing the defendant to serve one-half of the minimum sentence in home detention. U.S.S.G. Section 5C1.1(d).

II. THE COURT SHOULD GRANT A VARIANCE FROM THE GUIDELINE RANGE BASED ON THE CRITERIA OF 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a).

After calculating the correct sentencing guideline range, the District Court must consider several factors to determine a reasonable sentence: (1) the nature and circumstances of the offense and the history and characteristics of the defendant; (2) the need to reflect the

seriousness of the offense, to promote respect for the law, and to provide just punishment for the offense; (3) the need for deterrence; (4) the need to protect the public; (5) the need to provide the defendant with needed educational or vocational training or medical care; (6) the kinds of sentences available; (7) the Sentencing Guidelines range; (8) pertinent policy statements of the Sentencing Commission; (9) the need to avoid unwanted sentencing disparities; and (10) the need to provide restitution to victims. See 18§ 3553(a); Id.

Here, as part of the negotiated plea, the Government agrees that a variance to a non-custodial sentence is the appropriate disposition considering the Section 3553(a) factors, including the Defendant's age and health condition.

18 U.S.C. §3553(a)(1)--The History and Characteristics of Defendant John Hardee

John Hardee is 71 years old and suffers from injuries sustained in serious car accidents. He has two rods and screws in his back at the L5 and S1. He anticipates needing full knee replacement surgery in the future. He also suffers from high blood pressure and high cholesterol and has chronic prostate problems and kidney stones. He takes at least 9 separate medications, which are accurately described in paragraph 49 of the PSR. Many of these medications are for anxiety and depression which began in the 1990s.

In addition to his age and serious medical condition, we believe that John Hardee's lifelong contribution to his community, the State and the United States warrant a variance to a non-custodial sentence. Hardee was drafted into the U.S. Army after he graduated from high school in 1967 and became a Specialist E-5. John was honorably discharged in 1969.

John has always taken leadership roles in many civic organizations and churches in which he has been a member. Before moving to Columbia, John served as President of the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce, President of the Florence Lions Club and as

Chairman of the Deacon Board of the First Baptist Church in Florence. After moving to Columbia, John and his wife joined the First Baptist Church. He has been very active in the Sunday School and Church programs. He served as a Deacon and in other leadership roles in the Church.

John also served in various capacities on State and local boards and commissions. John served on the South Carolina Department of Transportation Commission. He has also served on the Central Midlands Council of Governments for many years. In addition, John served on the Midlands Authority for Conventions, Sports and Tourism for more than five (5) years, ultimately becoming Chairman. John also served as a member of the Central Midlands Regional Planning Authority.

We have attached character letters which attest to John's devotion to this community, this State and to his Church.

Other Section 3553 Factors

The other Section 3553 factors likewise support a non-custodial sentence for John Hardee. For example, Section 35532(a)(2)(C) directs the Court to evaluate the need for the sentence imposed to protect the public from further crimes of the defendant. We submit there is no realistic possibility that John Hardee will ever again be involved in any type of criminal conduct. Section 3553(a)(2)(D) focuses on the need for education and vocational training. These factors are not pertinent in the sentencing of John Hardee, a high school educated citizen who has distinguished himself with leadership roles in business and civic organizations.

CONCLUSION

In this case, there is no compelling need, based on the facts of the case to sentence Mr. Hardee to a period of incarceration in order to satisfy consideration of the Booker factors.

WHEREFORE, for all the foregoing reasons, we respectfully submit that a variance is warranted in this case.

Respectfully submitted.

s/ James M. Griffin
James M. Griffin (Fed ID 1053)
GRIFFIN DAVIS, LLC
4408 Forest Drive, Suite 300 (292016)
P.O. Box 999
Columbia, SC 29202
Tel. 803.744.8000
Fax 803.744.0805
jgriffin@griffindavislaw.com

s/Richard A. Harpootlian
Richard A. Harpootlian (Fed. ID No. 1730)
RICHARD A. HARPOOTLIAN P.A.
1410 Laurel Street (29201)
Post Office Box 1090
Columbia, South Carolina 29202
(803) 252-4848
Facsimile (803) 252-4810
rah@harpootlianlaw.com

ATTORNEYS FOR DEFENDANT
JOHN HARDEE

June 3, 2019

CERTIFICATE OF CONSULTATION

The undersigned counsel hereby certifies that he consulted with counsel for the government prior to filing this motion and that the government does not oppose the relief requested.

/s/ James M. Griffin
James M. Griffin (Fed ID 1053)
Griffin Davis LLC
P.O. Box 999
Columbia, S.C. 29202

Exhibit 1

Character Letters

Robert Dawkins
201 Hillridge Way
Columbia, South Carolina 29229
803-397-8519

May 30, 2019

RE: John N. Hardee

To Whom It May Concern:

I have known John Hardee since the early 1980's, when we were both living in Florence, SC. Both of us were very involved in community life there. I was very active in the Junior Chamber of Commerce eventually becoming National and International President. John Hardee was a leader whom I and others looked up to. He served as President of the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce, President of the Florence Lions Club and as Chairman of the Deacon Board of First Baptist Church of Florence.

When my wife and I decided in 1994, that our home needed to be in Columbia, SC, John Hardee was the first person I called, as he had already moved to Columbia, to show us around. We quickly found a home in Columbia largely due to John's help. He also steered us to membership of First Baptist Church of Columbia; which has been deeply spiritual and moving for us.

Not surprisingly, John Hardee was very involved in community life in Columbia. He served on the Board of Deacons of First Baptist Church of Columbia, twice. He is an active member of the Five Points Rotary Club along with many other volunteer and civic responsibilities. John served as a member of the SCDOT Board and did a GREAT job for the counties assigned to his district. He secured the funding needed for road projects better than anyone. He was successful in his SCDOT duties.

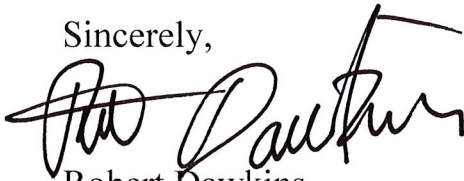
Leadership and community service have always been a trademark of John Hardee and his life. Perhaps he learned this from his mentor, Senator Strom Thurmond! John strongly believed in the leadership that Senator Thurmond offered to our state and country. He served on his Washington staff in the mid 1960's and as his campaign manager in Horry County in 1966. Senator Thurmond and John Hardee maintained a close relationship throughout his life. I remember in the mid 1990's that John was playing the part of George Washington for our church's Celebration of Liberty, and Senator Thurmond attended. As Senator Thurmond walked through

the vestibule the actors were there to greet him. Senator Thurmond went up to John, who was dressed in period costume, and said, hello John, how's it going. After Senator Thurmond retired and was close to death, the family selected a few former staffers to visit him, John Hardee was one and I hear that Senator Thurmond recognized him then.

If you want my summary of the John Hardee I know; Christian, husband, father, brother, leader, hard worker, man of action, veteran, patriot, above all, friend.

With all due respect, I remain

Sincerely,



Robert Dawkins

May 29, 2019

Philip R. Gregory
6562 Queens Way Drive
Columbia, South Carolina 29209

To Whom It May Concern:

I have had the privilege of knowing John Hardee for thirty plus years. I am writing this letter in hopes that it will help you to see the person John is despite any allegations that have been made against him. Having known John as long as I have, I believe I am in the position to be able to speak to his character. I have found John to be extremely kind, dependable, honest, and well-regarded man among his peers. I am an active member and deacon of First Baptist Church and I know John to be a dedicated Christian and an equally active member of our Sunday School and Church programs. I have also known John through our sons' scouting program, encouraging boys to develop into contributing members of the community. Our families have been through many seasons of life together.

We have known John to be very community minded using his influence to raise public funding for needed projects without seeking personal gain or recognition. Known to be a friend who can be counted on, John is an individual who does for others regardless of their economic or social status. His caring manner and true concern for others is evident in the way he deals with people. Seeking to assist those who are unable to bring a voice to the table, John has dedicated his career to service and community.

I am not aware of the charges being brought against him; however, I can attest to the strength of his character and honesty as he has been a trusted friend to me, my wife, and our family for many years.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Philip R. Gregory". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Philip R. Gregory
President
Sloan, Montgomery, Gregory & Hall, Inc.

Mr. Joe Carter
502 Angus Drive
Columbia, SC 29223

To whom it may concern,

My name is Joe Carter. I've known John Hardee for over 20 years and he is one of my closest friends. I've worked with John at Lamar Advertising which is where we got to know each other and became friends. I've seen John as a father, husband, Christian, Rotarian, SCDOT Commissioner and Patriot.

John's motto is "A Lifetime of Public Service". He has lived this out and it's fitting and factual. So much so it will be on his tomb stone. I'll verify it's there.

I worked with John at Lamar Advertising. We worked together on Governmental affairs, permitting and ordinance issues. John is well respected for his accomplishments at Lamar and the Outdoor Advertising Industry. He's led the outdoor industry in National, State, and local legislative issues. His leadership has protected the industry and hundreds of jobs. Locally John has helped the city of Columbia and multiple county jurisdictions develop ordinances that protected neighborhoods, historical areas, and vegetation. John is much respected among those he worked with and helped.

I have no friend closer than John Hardee. So much so that I consider him family. He's a true friend! We have shared a lot of moments together both good and bad. If there's any one I can count on its John Hardee. Those that know John would agree he's dependable, trust worthy, helpful and friendly. It's these core values and characteristics I Charis about our friendship.

John is an incredible husband and father. Married for over 33 years to Sheila and a son Johnny. Nothing has brought John more joy, pride and satisfaction than loving, providing for and protecting his family. John has truly given his all for his family. Not one need has ever been unmet.

John has served his community, state, country and is a true patriot. Actively served 23 years as a Rotarian. Served on many boards such as Counties Municipal Association, Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center, Richland County, City of Columbia, South Carolina Department of Transportation, and Church. He was the first ever legislative elected SCDOT Commissioners to serve back to back terms. Served in the United States Army with distinction and First Baptist Church of Columbia. John is most proud of working with the late Senator Strom Thurmond. Senator Thurmond was instrumental in John's life.

All men stumble and fail and John N. Hardee is no different. I have no doubt John will learn from his mistake and move forward. Most of all I hope John will continue to be the servant he has always been. John has always been there for me and I want him to know I'll be there for him also!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Carter", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Joe Carter

I am writing in reference to Mr. John N. Hardee whom I have known for 15 years. I have served on the staff of the First Baptist Church of Columbia since 2002 and recently was elected senior pastor. Mr. Hardee has been an active member of this church since 1993, so that is the capacity in which I have known him.

Mr. Hardee is active in his Sunday School class, has previously served in leadership roles, is a regular attender and participant in the life of the church, and has demonstrated integrity and strong character in his participation. John is very dedicated to his family and community, and has always been supportive to the mission of our church. He has been known as helpful and charitable both to friends and strangers in need. I see him as a caring man and am grateful for his friendship to me.

Mr. Hardee has been a regular host during our churchwide luncheons and dinners, faithfully demonstrating leadership through service. He is faithful in every position he has held, always being present and engaged in the assignment. His mantra has been that he wants to help, and his decisions have appeared to align with that philosophy.

Thank you for your consideration of this reference to the character of John N. Hardee from the perspective of his pastor.

Sincerely,



Rev. Wesley D. Church

May 29, 2019

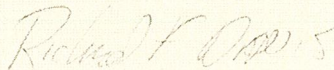
To Whom It May Concern:

I have known John Hardee for thirty-plus years. During our relationship, I have known him to be a hard working individual who spent a great deal of his time trying to help his fellow citizens with their problems and concerns.

John is a faithful member of First Baptist Church in Columbia and has served as a deacon in the church. He is widely regarded by lawmakers, friends, and constituents as someone that will go the extra mile to assist them. On anything he approaches, John's goal is to find a resolution through hard work and tenacity. He treats every request with equal import regardless of the person's status or lot in life.

John has strong values, is a great husband and father, and approaches life with a servant's heart.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard F. Davis".

Richard F. Davis

Don Freeman
121 Viking Drive
Columbia, South Carolina 29229

May 29, 2019

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Don Freeman and I am a registered professional engineer in the State of South Carolina. I worked for 30 plus years with the South Carolina Department of Transportation. I was State Highway Engineer from 1997 until 2005. John Hardee was appointed to the South Carolina Department of Transportation Commission in 1997. I have known John Hardee since that time. As State Highway Engineer, I worked very closely with John on a daily basis. We were faced with some very serious issues from an engineering perspective as well as sensitive issues of a political nature.

John always conducted himself in a professional manner and I found John to be an honest person with integrity. As such, John also became my friend.

I retired from the Department of Transportation in 2005. Since that time, I have maintained a relationship with John through the years. We get together on a regular basis for breakfast, lunch or just to visit.

John has not shared any details of his situation with me. I only know what I have read or heard from the media. However, I do not believe that John has ever intentionally or knowingly conducted himself in a manner that he believed to be wrong.

John is a Christian man with strong family values. I am sure that John has learned a valuable lesson and will not make the same mistake again, whatever that mistake may have been.

Yours very truly,


Don Freeman



John Hardee <jnhardee@gmail.com>

John Hardee character reference

1 message

Johnny Jeffcoat <jwjlexsc@gmail.com>
To: Jnhardee@gmail.com

Thu, May 30, 2019 at 4:18 PM

To: Whom it may concern,

While serving on Lexington County Council for over 20 years, I had the pleasure of working with John Hardee on many occasions. John is a hard working honorable individual. John Hardee is known in our region as a man you can count on if you ever need help. John helps people and doesn't expect anything in return. John Hardee is one of the best friends Lexington County and Richland County has ever had. John Hardee is a man of unquestionable integrity and a friend to everybody.

Johnny Jeffcoat
former Chairman of
Lexington County Council

Sent from my iPhone
Johnny Jeffcoat
509-3089

May 30, 2019

J. Kevin Reeley
904 Lonsdale Drive
West Columbia, SC 291790

To Whom it May Concern:

I have known John Hardee for several years. My earliest recollection of John was from First Baptist Church where he and I are both members. I have always found John to have the highest character and integrity. He has always been professional and helpful any time that I have called upon his help.

John and I have become close friends and I really appreciate his honesty and kindred spirit. John is the kind of friend, I would imagine, anyone would want to have.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Kevin Reeley", with a stylized flourish extending from the end of the name.

J. Kevin Reeley

May 29, 2019

2152 Dog Leg Road
Leesville, SC 29070

To whom it may concern:

I have been friends with John Hardee for the last 20 years. I met John while he was on the SCDOT Commission in 1998 and I was employed by Lexington County as Director of Public Works. Not only did I find John very professional in his capacity as a SCDOT Commissioner but we developed a friendship outside of our work life. In periods of time when John was not on the SCDOT Commission we still maintained that friendship.

In my experience John has a big heart and has always tried to help where he could. He cared about small municipalities with the same passion he did with larger entities, always willing to meet and try to assist however he could.

If anyone would like to contact me in this regard I can be reached by cell phone at 803-309-4561.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Fechtel". The signature is stylized with a large initial "J" and a series of loops and strokes for the rest of the name.

John Fechtel



Advertising Inc.
Post Office Box 31463
Charleston, South Carolina 29417

(843) 767-8100 (843) 767-7999 Fax

MAY 20, 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

RE: John Hardee

Please be advised that I have been associated with John Hardee since the early 70's. We have delt with each other for many years, and I have always found him to be very fair and honest.

Jobh Hardee helped many people in this State and has always been very unselfish with his help. John Hardee and I were instrumetal in getting legislation thru, creating the Scenic Highway Commission. We are both past Chairman of this Commission, which has added many new Scenic roads in South Carolina.

I have worked with John on many other projects in South Carolina, and I have always found him very honest and trustworthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Douglas W. McFarland'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Douglas W. McFarland, President

May 30, 2019

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to attest to the character of John N. Hardee, whom I have known and acquainted myself with for the past fifteen years.

I first met John in the fall of 2004 on a matter concerning a traffic signal located in the Town of Pine Ridge, SC. I was a newly elected Lexington county councilman and reached out to Commissioner John Hardee for assistance in a matter that had long been a traffic and safety concern for the community. From that day forward, anytime I requested assistance, advice or information about matters that concern SCDOT, John was always willing to listen. John always encouraged the local and state governments to work together for the benefit of the public. In his capacity as a Commissioner, I always felt John had the best interest of the community at heart.

John and I served together as members of the Central Midlands Council of Governments for many years. In his capacity as a COG member, he knew that he represented many jurisdictions between two counties and multiple municipalities. He was always forthright, honest, and decisive in his actions in assisting the entire region. John's appointed public service was a tremendous asset to my County and the region.

On a personal level, I have witnessed John's Faith in God, love of his family, and a desire to serve mankind. John's desire to help may be his greatest asset and fault at the same time. However, I never felt John wasn't sincere in his actions to be a servant and a friend.

Over these past many years, I have witnessed a man willing to answer the call for help and provide leadership within his community. I am proud to say I have crossed paths in my public service with John Hardee and can call him a friend.

Sincerely,



M. Todd Cullum
Lexington County Council

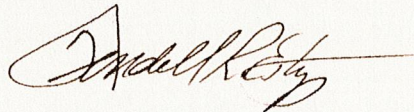
To Whom It May Concern,

I have served as John Hardee's pastor for the past 26 years. During that time, I was privileged to spend time with John and his wife, Shelia.

John was very faithful in attendance and active in service. John and Shelia were involved in ministry from assisting those in need, working in food service or a valuable advisor in administrative decisions. I continue to call on John as a trusted counselor.

I believe John Hardee to be a man of character and integrity and am pleased to write this letter on his behalf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Wendell Estep", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Wendell Estep

Mr. David E. Branham, Sr.
614 Fletcher Drive
Kershaw, SC 29067

May 28, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Mr. John Hardee

Mr. John Hardee is a man of outstanding character. I have known John for approximately 10 years. During this time, he has proven to be forthright, trustworthy and responsible. He is a dedicated family man and a genuine friend. John is the type of man you can always count on to provide honest feedback or lend help in any way he can. He attends First Baptist Church of Columbia and has frequently extended an invitation to my wife and me to attend various special programs. While we served together on the South Carolina Highway Commission, he consistently demonstrated good character. John proved to be reasonable and willing to consider all sides of a situation with understanding. In the years I have known John, I have never observed any behavior that would give me reason to doubt his character or his values. In fact, I hold him in highest regard.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David E. Branham Sr." in a cursive script.

Mr. David E. Branham, Sr.

May 29, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I have had the pleasure of knowing John Hardee for more than twenty years. We have each spent time working with the S.C. Legislature. I have served with John in the Midlands Authority for Conventions, Sports, and Tourism for more than five years. John has always demonstrated professionalism and fairness. He has always dedicated his personal time to help others. John gets a lot of pleasure in helping others. He volunteers much of his time to serve on various boards to help his community.

John always shows how important his family and friends are to him. He is always there to help when needed.

I consider John Hardee my friend and he has influenced my life in a very positive way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Sammy Hendrix", followed by a large "X" mark.

Sammy Hendrix
Lexington County resident

May 29, 2019

RE: Character Reference for John Hardee

To Whom It May Concern:

My husband and I have lived next door to John Hardee and his family for twenty-five years. The insight we have as John's neighbors is one based on daily life. We have witnessed John's dedication as a husband and father, the commitment he has to his church and church family, and the great joy he takes in contributing to the wellbeing of others.

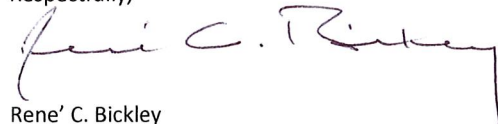
John values family. As the leader of his family, he sets an example of how a man should conduct himself in character and in deed. We have never heard him speak unkindly or with malice towards others. He treats his wife with kindness and respect. By her side he has worked diligently to raise their son in the church and with an understanding of the importance of character, integrity, hard work, and dedication to purpose. He is actively involved in the life of their extended family as well, and he seems to take great joy from the relationships he has developed within that family.

John values faith. When we first moved into our home next door to the Hardees, we quickly learned that John's faith was important to him and that his upbringing and integrity made him a person on whom we could depend and trust. Early morning hello's and daily conversations in the driveway over the course of two and a half decades quickly revealed and underscored his grounded, consistent, and well-measured approach to life. The longer we have known John, the more our respect for his life experience and his insight has grown, and we are proud to call him friend. His commitment to his church and to his faith community at First Baptist Church, Columbia, is commendable. When other men are scurrying off to the golf course or to the lake on Sunday mornings, year-round John can be seen dressed and ready to attend services. His active involvement within the community of faith is not for show, but rather a reflection of the values first instilled within his childhood home and values which John later claimed as his own.

John values friendship. We have watched him maintain long term friendships within our neighborhood, his church, and the greater community and with a variety of people over the years. As our friend and neighbor, he has impacted our lives in very real ways. We have entrusted John to vote our proxy on important neighborhood issues when we have been unable to HOA meetings. He is the kind of neighbor who keeps a close eye on of our home and our two dogs when we are away whether it's for an hour or for several weeks. John is genuinely kind and invests himself for the good of those around him. Over the last several years my husband has struggled with debilitating back pain. Having faced similar issues, John recommended my husband see his doctor in Charleston. In addition to his recommendation...and unbeknownst to us..., John called the doctor's office to set the wheels in motion for a timely appointment that would address the source of my husband's pain and ultimately improve his quality of life and that of our family. This is just one example of how John takes the time to make a difference.

In closing, I am honored to speak as a character reference on John Hardee's behalf. In the quarter century I have lived next door to him, I have known a man who is unselfish and consistent in his dedication to family, faith, and friends. He takes great joy in impacting the lives of others, and he has a genuine interest in what is in the best interest of the community in which he lives and serves.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rene' C. Bickley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Rene' C. Bickley

288 Tombee Lane

Columbia, SC 29209

R.L. Schmiedeker
102 Bithynia Circle
Irmo, South Carolina 29063
803-732-2588
803-960-7375 (cell)
rls1200@bellsouth.net

May 29, 2019

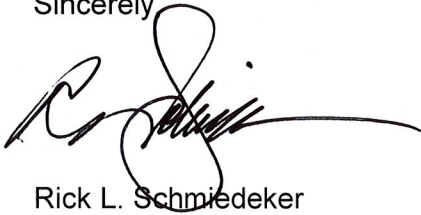
To Whom It May Concern:

RE : John N. Hardee

My wife, Judi, and I have known John N. Hardee (and his wife Sheila) for over ten years. We attend church together at First Baptist Church, travel and cruise together, and socialize on a regular basis. John and I have even owned a classic car together.

We have always found John to be of the highest character, willing to help anyone in any way he could, or to improve their quality of life. Anyone that meets John is a better person because of that relationship. He is very friendly and personable.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick L. Schmiedeker", with a large, stylized "S" at the end.

Rick L. Schmiedeker

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Judi Schmiedeker", with a large, stylized "S" at the end.

Judi Schmiedeker

May 29, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I have known John Hardee for the last 12 years. I have learned that John is a very kind person and is always eager to help others. John goes out of his way to help people in their jobs, to help them when they are worried or stressed, and to help introduce people to others that can help. John truly gets joy for helping others. He is a strong community supporter and gives hundreds of hours of his time to make his community a better place.

I know John to be a strong Baptist and someone who is proud of his relation with God. He encourages others to strengthen their relationship with God. John enjoys helping those that are struggling with life's challenges.

John defines what a true friend is. One that's there for you even when there is nothing in return for himself. Those that are fortunate to call John Hardee a friend are better off in their lives because of it.

John is a gentleman and a strong believer in family.

I am one of those people that is proud to call John Hardee a friend.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Ellen". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a long, sweeping underline.

Bill Ellen
President/CEO
Experience Columbia

NEXSEN|PRUET

May 30, 2019

Robert D. Coble
Member
Admitted in SC

Re: John N. Hardee

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing in support of John N. Hardee. I have known John for almost forty years. I wanted to share with you the positive accomplishments that he has made to our community over his lifetime of service to our state and city. John is a tireless worker in every endeavor, and he has been a model and productive citizen of Columbia and South Carolina his entire life.

By way of background, I served as a member of the Richland County Council from 1985-1988 and as Mayor of the City of Columbia from 1990-2010. During many of those years John Hardee was a member of the South Carolina Transportation Commission. We worked closely together on many transportation projects that improved the quality of life for the citizens of the Columbia area. John was a hardworking and selfless advocate for transportation improvements including highways and light rail. John and I worked closely together to get funding for the Five Points Infrastructure and Beautification Project. We travelled together to Washington on a number of occasions to meet with the South Carolina Federal Legislative Delegation.

Charleston

Charlotte

Columbia

Greensboro

Greenville

Hilton Head

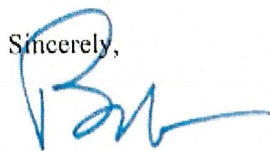
Myrtle Beach

Raleigh

John also served as a member of the Central Midlands Regional Planning Authority and as Chairman of the Midlands Authority for Conventions, Sports and Tourism. In both roles he played a major part in improving our community. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the University of South Carolina's Colonial Life Arena and played a major role in building the Greater Columbia Convention Center.

John is a family man and a faithful and active member of Columbia's First Baptist Church. I am proud to call John a friend. I hope that all the good John has done for our state, city, his family and church can be taken into consideration during this difficult time.

Sincerely,



Robert D. Coble

1230 Main Street
Suite 700 (29201)
PO BOX 2426
Columbia, SC 29202
www.nexsenpruet.com

T 803.253.8211
F 803.727.1424
E BCoble@nexsenpruet.com
Nexsen Pruet, LLC
Attorneys and Counselors at Law



ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS, INC.

1300 12th Street, Suite A • P.O. Box 2299 • Cayce, SC 29171 • (803) 791-1400 • FAX: (803) 791-8110

May 28, 2019

RE: Character Reference for Mr. John Hardee

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please accept this letter as an endorsement of the good character of John Hardee. I have known John for over 20 years and have always found him to be an honorable gentleman of integrity and beyond reproach. I have had numerous opportunities to work with John over the years during his tenure as a Commissioner with the South Carolina Department of Transportation, representing the 2nd Congressional District. I can attest without hesitation that my interactions with him have consistently been the epitome of professionalism, as he has always displayed a strong code of ethics, competency, and accountability. I know his demeanor as being forthright, honest, and courteous not only to his peers but also to his constituents, unfailingly being responsive, trustworthy and approachable.

I believe John to be an honorable man, and a valuable member of our community. Should you have any further questions regarding my endorsement of John Hardee's strong character, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Kenneth A. Bingham
Vice President, American Engineering Consultants, Inc.
Former Member, South Carolina House of Representatives, 2000-2016
1300 12th Street, Suite A
Cayce, SC 29033
(803) 791-1400